had to practically take over the entire responsibility for the yatra; and

(c) what measures are being taken to ensure that last year's events are not repeated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) The Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA), a Pak based, predominantly mercenary outfit had issued threats against the Amarnath Yatra, which were supported by certain other militant organisations like the Al Fateh Force.

(b) The HuA had issued similar threats against the Yatra last year. The HuA had threatened the employees and private persons/groups, who traditionally provide services and are involved in the Yatra arrangements, against cooperating with the administration. To meet the situation arising from these threats, the State Government had made elaborate administrative and security arrangements for the Yatra and the related logistics, by pooling the resources and manpower from within the State, with the assistance of the Army and the Central Security Forces deployed there. As a result the Yatra had passed off smoothly and over 40,000 persons participated in it.

(c) In the current year also, the State Administration made elaborate security, administrative and logistics arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Yatra which has passed off largely peacefully, but for a few minor incidents of blasts/ explosions which, were not allowed to affect the smooth conduct of the Yatra Over 60,000 persons are reported to have participated in the Yatra in the current year.

Economy measures in Defence expenditure

1732. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what economy measures have been taken in Defence expenditure;

(b) whether this has adversely affected our defence preparedness; and

(c) what steps are being taken to keep our defence in the best State at the least cost?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Various measures have been initiated to achieve optimum utilisation of limited resources. These measures are designed to effect economy without undermining our full preparedness. These measures *inter-alia* include redeployment of existing manpower to effect economy, introduction of cost efficient training methods, rationalisation and reduction of equipment holdings, streamlining and improvement of inventory management and introduction of fuel economy.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The operational requirements of the Armed Forces are kept under constant review to ensure adequate levels of Defence preparedness. Measures to effect economy are not allowed to impinge on the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces.

बिहार में कुष्ठ रोगी

1733. **श्री नरेश यादव:** क्या **स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) देश में कुष्ठ रोगियों की संख्या कितनी है;

(ख) इसका कितना प्रतिशत बिहार में है; और

(ग) कुष्ठ निवारण हेतु सरकार द्वारा क्या कार्यवाही की जा रही है?